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**Advancement of women**

# Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

## Report of the Secretary-General**

*Summary*

The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 62/218 on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its sixty-fourth session a report on the status of the Convention and the implementation of the resolution. It covers the period from 15 August 2007 to 24 August 2009.

* A/64/150.

** The present report was submitted late so as to reflect the most recent developments from the forty-fourth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

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# I. Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. The year 2009 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted by General Assembly resolution 34/180. It was opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York on 1 March 1980 and, in accordance with article 27 of the Convention, entered into force on 3 September 1981.

2. As at 24 August 2009, 186 States had ratified, acceded to or succeeded to the Convention, of which 82 had acceded to it and 8 had succeeded to it. The most recent State to accede to the Convention was Qatar, on 29 April 2009; the number of States parties therefore rose by one during the current reporting period (see previous report A/62/290). The list of States parties to the Convention and the dates of their ratification or accession to the Convention are on the website of the Office of Legal Affairs (http://untreaties.org).

3. As at 24 August 2009, 55 States parties had deposited with the Secretary-General instruments of acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, which relates to the meeting time of the Committee. The additional six acceptances since the submission of the last report were by the following States parties: Argentina, on 9 April 2009; Azerbaijan, on 23 May 2008; Cook Islands, on 27 November 2009; Costa Rica, on 27 April 2009; Cuba, on 7 March 2008; and Grenada, on 12 December 2007.

4. During the reporting period, reservations were entered by Qatar; objections to reservations were received from the Slovak Republic; and withdrawals of reservations were received from Algeria, Egypt and Luxembourg.

# II. Status of the Optional Protocol to the Convention

5. By its resolution 54/4, the General Assembly adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Optional Protocol was opened for signature, ratification and accession at United Nations Headquarters on 10 December 1999 and, in accordance with article 16, paragraph 1, entered into force on 22 December 2000.

6. As at 24 August 2009, 98 States parties had ratified or acceded to the Optional Protocol. This represents an increase in 10 States parties since the submission of the last report. These 10 States parties were: Angola, on 1 November 2007; Australia, on 4 December 2008; Cook Islands, on 27 November 2007; Guinea-Bissau, on 5 August 2009; Mauritius, on 31 October 2008; Mozambique, on 4 November 2008; Rwanda, on 15 December 2008; Switzerland, on 29 November 2008; Tunisia, on 23 September 2008; and Turkmenistan, on 20 May 2009.

# III. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

## A. Substantive and technical servicing

7. Responsibility for supporting the Committee was transferred from the Division for the Advancement of Women to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), together with five posts (2 P-4, 1 P-3, 1 P-2 and 1 General Service (Other level) (see A/62/6 (Sect. 23), para 23.67) on 1 January 2008, and all sessions during 2008 and 2009 were supported by staff of that Office.

8. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has ensured that the strong links between the Committee and the intergovernmental machinery responsible for the promotion of gender equality continue to be maintained. The Chair of the Committee participated in the fifty-second and fifty-third sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2008 and 2009 and participated, with other members, in various side events. The Chair of the Committee also addressed the Third Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.

9. The Committee has taken a consistent interest in the question of the reform of the United Nations gender equality architecture. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women regularly briefed and discussed this question and current developments with Committee experts. Briefings were also provided by the Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women. UNIFEM integrates the Convention and the work of the Committee into its activities, while the Division for the Advancement of Women continues to draw attention to the Convention and the recommendations of the Committee on priority issues considered by the Commission on the Status of Women and in other mandated reports prepared for intergovernmental bodies on gender equality. The Division for the Advancement of Women also regularly invited experts from the Committee to participate in expert group meetings and side events convened in conjunction with intergovernmental processes.

10. The Committee has taken full advantage of the opportunities provided by OHCHR, interacting regularly with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, her Deputy and other senior staff, and has welcomed opportunities for discussion with the President of the Human Rights Council and special rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council on issues of mutual concern. During its forty-second session, the Committee met with the President of the Human Rights Council, while at its forty-third session it received an in-depth briefing on the Council's universal periodic review mechanism. The Committee also met with the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council.

11. In terms of its interaction with special procedures mandate holders, at its forty-third session, the Committee met with the Special Rapporteurs on violence against women, its causes and consequences and on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. At its forty-fourth session, it met with the Independent Expert on minority issues. The Committee also received a briefing from the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti at its forty-third session, during which it considered the

combined initial to sixth periodic reports of Haiti. A representative of the Committee attended the first session of the Forum on Minority Issues.

12. The Committee continued to contribute actively to the work of the human rights treaty bodies, especially within the framework of the annual meetings of chairpersons of treaty bodies and the inter-committee meeting. The Chair and designated members of the Committee participated in these meetings in 2008 (23 to 27 June 2008) and 2009 (29 June to 3 July 2009). Representatives of the Committee also participated in discussions in other committees on matters such as potential general recommendations and the work of OHCHR in general, including statistical information in the field of human rights and a representative of the Committee participated in a panel event during the eleventh session of the Human Rights Council in June 2009. Close relationships were also forged with individual treaty bodies. Of particular note is the establishment of a joint working group of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The rapporteur on follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee against Torture also provided a comprehensive briefing to the Committee at its forty-fourth session, which served as a basis for the development of its follow-up procedure.

13. Building on its statement "Towards a unified and integrated human rights treaty bodies system" adopted at its thirty-fifth session, the Committee has sought, where appropriate, to harmonize its working methods with other treaty bodies. Accordingly, in 2008, it adopted the terminology of "Concluding observations" rather than "Concluding comments" (decision 40/III, A/63/38, Part one, Chap. I) and finalized its treaty-specific guidelines for reporting, which complement the guidelines for the common core document (A/63/38, annex I). Following the practice of other treaty bodies, it also introduced a procedure to follow up its recommendations in its concluding observations. The Committee will keep its working practices under review, including in the light of the practice of other human rights treaty bodies.

## B. The Committee's evaluation

14. At its forty-fourth session, in the light of General Assembly resolution 62/218, in which the Assembly urged the Committee to evaluate progress, the Committee noted that, during its past five sessions, it had made good progress in eliminating the backlog of reports awaiting review. Combined with its strategies to encourage reporting, this resulted in the submission of outstanding reports by a number of States parties. Three communications, one general recommendation (26 on migrant women workers) and four statements on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 60, Gaza, the international financial crisis and its consequences for the human rights of women and girls, and gender and climate change were finalized.

15. The Committee is gratified that it continues to attract a wide following within the United Nations system and civil society, including national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations, and that it has been able to interact with the wider human rights framework, including the Human Rights Council, the special procedures mandate holders and other treaty bodies. Its transfer to OHCHR and the sessions in Geneva have enabled the Committee to interact regularly with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to develop close relationships with

Geneva-based United Nations entities and other bodies, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

16. The Committee considers that it has made strong efforts to harmonize its practices with those of other treaty bodies. It was one of the first treaty bodies to finalize the treaty-specific reporting guidelines used with the guidelines for the common core document, which are now being implemented by States parties within the context of the treaty body reform. It has harmonized its terminology with other treaty bodies and has sought to make its concluding observations more detailed, country-specific and action-oriented. The introduction of headings has made the concluding observations more user-friendly and easier to implement, as national line ministries are able to identify more easily the concerns and recommendations of most relevance to them. The Committee also considers that its follow-up procedure, which is based on that of other treaty bodies, will strengthen implementation at the national level.

17. The Committee believes that it has maintained and deepened its relationship with the United Nations mechanisms concerned with women's advancement, while strengthening its links with the human rights machinery. It believes this has been facilitated by the fact that it meets once annually at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, since this allows it to have regular interaction with the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), as well as the many United States-based non-governmental organizations that focus on development or security issues. The Committee considers that the 2009 annual session has helped it to maintain its relationship with the Commission on the Status of Women and ensure its ongoing participation in the development activities of the United Nations and in discussions on women, peace and security. Its annual session in New York has also allowed it to contribute to discussions on the emerging gender architecture of the United Nations and should ensure that the Committee develops close links with the emerging gender entity. This entity should also benefit from the work of the Committee.

**Fulfilment by States parties of reporting obligations**

18. Article 18, paragraph 1, of the Convention provides that States parties undertake to submit reports on the implementation of the Convention within one year after its entry into force for the State concerned and thereafter at least every four years and further whenever the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women so requests.

19. Between 15 August 2007 and 15 August 2009, the Secretary-General received the reports of the following States parties: Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Belarus, Bahrain, Bhutan, Botswana, Burkina Faso, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, the Netherlands, Malta, Niger, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan.

20. During the period covered by the present report, the Committee held the following five sessions: fortieth session, 14 January to 1 February 2008; forty-first session, 30 June to 18 July 2008; forty-second session, October 2008; forty-third session, January 2009; and forty-fourth session, 20 July to 7 August 2009. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/218, the Committee met in parallel chambers to consider reports during three of its five sessions, namely the forty-second, forty-third and forty-fourth. During these sessions, the Committee considered the reports of 46 States parties and reviewed the implementation of the Convention by one State party in the absence of a report.

**Reports awaiting consideration, overdue reports and requests for follow-up reports**

21. As at 15 August 2009, 31 reports submitted by States parties had yet to be considered by the Committee.

22. As at 15 August 2009, 56 States parties had a total of 102 overdue reports, including 20 initial reports, 17 second periodic reports, 13 third periodic reports, 20 fourth periodic reports, 14 fifth periodic reports, 11 sixth periodic reports and 7 seventh periodic reports.

23. In the light of the reduced backlog of reports awaiting consideration, the Committee initiated a systematic effort to encourage States parties to submit long overdue initial reports. On the basis of its decisions 29/I and 31/III (i), it established that it would proceed with consideration of the implementation of the Convention in the absence of a report only as a last resort and in the presence of a delegation. The Committee continued its practice of inviting States parties with long-overdue initial reports to submit all their overdue reports as a combined report by a specific date. At its sessions during the reporting period, the Committee decided to invite a number of States parties whose initial reports had been overdue for more than five years or whose periodic reports had been overdue for more than 10 years to submit all their overdue reports as a combined report within two years. States invited to submit their reports in accordance with this practice during the reporting period include Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Djibouti, Iraq, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Zimbabwe (A/63/38, Part two, para. 419; A/64/38, Part one, para. 23). At its forty-fourth session, the Committee decided that the secretariat should systematically remind States parties whose reports are five years overdue or more to submit their reports as soon as possible. It requested the secretariat to send reminders to Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago and Zambia, and to update the Committee on the matter at its forty-fifth session.

24. At its forty-third session, the Committee considered the implementation of the Convention in Dominica, in the absence of a report, and adopted concluding observations based on the dialogue with representatives of the State party (CEDAW/C/DMA/CO/AR). The report of Haiti was submitted in 2008 and those of Guinea-Bissau and Liberia were submitted in 2009; they were considered by the Committee at its forty-third and forty-fourth sessions, respectively. The reports of the Bahamas, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka were received in 2009.

25. A follow-up report requested by the Committee following consideration of India's combined second and third periodic reports at its thirty-seventh session (CEDAW/C/IND/CO/3) was received on 10 July 2009.

## C. Working methods of the Committee

26. Taking into account that the General Assembly is striving to limit the length of documentation, the Committee's report no longer includes the concluding observations on the reports of States parties or the decisions on communications; these are published as separate documents in all official languages of the United Nations and are posted on the OHCHR website.

27. The Committee's overview of its working methods was updated to ensure that its working methods are readily accessible to States parties and others interested in the implementation of the Convention (see CEDAW/C/2009/II/4, annex). The overview is also available on the OHCHR website.

28. The Committee has continued to convene its pre-session working group two sessions in advance of the consideration of a report, to ensure that States parties have enough time to respond to their respective lists of issues and questions and that the responses are available in all official languages when the reports are considered.

29. The Committee now routinely includes the last paragraph of its concluding comments, which establishes the due date for the State party's next periodic report. In cases where the next periodic report is overdue or becomes due within a year of the date of consideration, the Committee requests the State party to submit its next report as a combined periodic report and, at its fortieth session, it adopted decision 40/IV, in which it requests States parties that reported at that session to present their subsequent two reports as combined reports.

30. During the reporting period, the Committee focused on ensuring that the concluding observations on the reports of States parties were more user-friendly, concrete and precise, so that they could be implemented more easily at the national level. At its forty-first session, it decided to adopt the practice of inserting titles (subject headings) in its concluding observations, and agreed on a list of titles which would be applied flexibly and as appropriate for the State party concerned (A/63/38, Part two, annex X). Also at that session, the Committee decided to introduce a follow-up procedure whereby it would include a request to individual States parties in the concluding observations for information on steps taken to implement specific recommendations. The request would call on States parties to provide such information to the Committee within two years. The Committee also decided to assess the experience of its follow-up procedure in 2011 (A/63/38, Part two, decision 41/III). The first follow-up report submitted under this procedure was received in July 2009.

31. At its forty-fourth session, the Committee decided to appoint a rapporteur on follow-up to concluding observations and an alternate; it also adopted a framework for the rapporteur's mandate, which would be for one year. A maximum of two recommendations would be identified for follow-up; the criteria for those recommendations would be that their lack of implementation constituted a major obstacle to the implementation of the Convention and that implementation was feasible within the suggested time frame. The follow-up report would be made public. Where possible, the follow-up rapporteur would collaborate with the country rapporteur on the assessment of the follow-up report. The rapporteur would report to the Committee at each session and her or his report would be included in the Committee's report to the General Assembly. The rapporteur should be assisted by a

member of the Secretariat; support would be requested from the High Commissioner in that regard.

32. The Committee continued its interaction with the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system that contribute to its work and support the full implementation of the Convention at the national level. In particular, immediately prior to its forty-fourth session, the Committee participated in a seminar on women of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) co-organized by OHCHR and UNHCR. It continued to benefit from joint information submitted on countries under consideration by United Nations country teams, and encouraged the entities of the United Nations system to expand this practice and, in particular, to make such information available to the Committee's pre-session working group and undertake follow-up activities on the basis of the Committee's concluding observations at the country level.

33. The Committee continued its practice of meeting informally with non-governmental organizations wishing to present country-specific information on States parties whose reports were before it, at the beginning of the first and second weeks of the session. The Committee's pre-session working group also provided opportunities for non-governmental organizations to present written and oral information. General and session-specific information notes for non-governmental organizations are regularly posted on the OHCHR website.

34. The Committee adopted a statement on its relationship with national human rights institutions at its fortieth session which, inter alia, welcomed the provision, by national human rights institutions, of information on States parties' reports that are before the pre-session working groups and sessions of the Committee. Several national institutions provided oral and written information during the reporting period.

35. The Committee continued to emphasize the important role of parliamentarians in the implementation of the Convention and the follow-up to concluding observations and, beginning at its forty-second session, has included a standard paragraph on the role of parliaments in each observation. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) regularly submits country-specific information on the implementation of the Convention in States parties and organizes regular capacity-building sessions for parliaments on the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

36. The Committee continued its practice of adopting statements on particular events or developments. These include a statement on the commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted at the Committee's forty-second session (A/64/38, Part one, annex II); a statement on the international financial crisis and its consequences for the human rights of women and girls and a statement on Gaza, adopted at its forty-third session (A/64/38, Part two, annexes I and II, respectively); and a statement on gender and climate change, adopted at its forty-fourth session.

37. The Committee convened one informal meeting with States parties to the Convention during its forty-first session, at which Committee experts briefed the States parties on the Committee's working methods and other issues.

38. At the invitation of the Government of Switzerland, the Committee held its sixth informal meeting in Geneva, from 24 to 26 October 2007. At the meeting, it

continued the revision of its guidelines on reporting and discussed a general recommendation on article 2 of the Convention, follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations, interaction with national human rights institutions and its relationship with the Human Rights Council. The meeting also held an orientation session with OHCHR, in the light of the transfer of the servicing of the Committee to that Office as at 1 January 2008.

39. The Committee adopted a general recommendation on migrant women at its forty-second session. It continued to work on a general recommendation on article 2 of the Convention and following a discussion on its long-term programme of work on general recommendations, established working groups on general recommendations on the human rights of older women and the economic consequences of marriage and its dissolution (A/63/38, Part one, paras. 28 to 30). At its forty-fourth session, the Committee convened informal discussions on both topics, with the participation of United Nations system entities and civil society.

## D. Working methods with regard to the Optional Protocol

40. During the reporting period, the Committee continued to carry out its activities under the Optional Protocol to the Convention. On average, it allocated two meetings per session to matters relating to the Optional Protocol.

41. The Committee's Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol held five sessions (3 three-day sessions, 1 four-day session and 1 six-day session) immediately prior to the Committee's fortieth, forty-first, forty-second and forty-fourth sessions, and immediately after the forty-third session. To date, the Working Group has registered 22 communications, six of which were registered during the reporting period.

42. The Committee decided to discontinue examining one communication during its fortieth session (No. 9/2005) and two communications during its forty-second session (No. 14/2007 and No. 16/2007).

43. At its forty-second session, the Committee took action on one communication, deciding that it was inadmissible under article 4, paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol on the basis that all available domestic remedies had not yet been exhausted (CEDAW/C/42/D/15/2007). A dissenting opinion was submitted. At its forty-fourth session, the Committee decided that communication No. 12/2007 was inadmissible under article 2 of the Optional Protocol because the authors lacked the quality of victim. Communication No. 13/2007 was considered inadmissible for some authors because they lacked the quality of victim under article 2 of the Optional Protocol; for other authors, it was inadmissible *ratione temporis* under article 4, paragraph 2 (e) of the Optional Protocol; and for one author, it was inadmissible for non-exhaustion of domestic remedies under article 4, paragraph 1.

44. The Committee continued its follow-up activities to the views on communications. At its forty-second session, it adopted its first report on follow-up to views on individual communications, which compiled in summary form all the information received up to the forty-first session (A/64/38, Part one, annex XII). The Committee decided that an updated report will be prepared for each session and that the reports will be compiled in a chapter on follow-up in the annual report.

45. On the recommendation of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol, the Committee discussed and adopted a note, at its fortieth session, on the formulation and format of individual opinions on Committee decisions (A/63/38, Part two, annex IX). It also revised its model communication form and adopted a fact sheet on the submission of individual communications under the Optional Protocol.

46. At its forty-first session, the Committee adopted decision 41/I (A/63/38, Part two, chap. I), in which it decided that the determination of compatibility of reservations with the object and purpose of the Convention (see article 28, para. 2 of the Convention) not only falls within its function in relation to the reporting procedure under article 18 of the Convention, but also in relation to individual communication and inquiry procedures under the Optional Protocol.

## IV. Efforts to encourage universal ratification of the Convention, its Optional Protocol and acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention

47. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women have continued to encourage universal ratification of the Convention and the Optional Protocol and ensure acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, which stipulates the meeting time allocated to the Committee. They have encouraged related action in their meetings with delegations, in statements and presentations at United Nations Headquarters, at other duty stations, and at conferences and other forums. The activities celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention and the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Optional Protocol by the General Assembly focused on encouraging the remaining States to ratify the treaties. At its forty-fourth session, the Committee adopted decision 44/III urging ratification of the Convention and the Optional Protocol and encouraging States parties to them to celebrate the respective anniversaries at the national level.

## V. Technical assistance provided to States parties

48. Technical assistance and capacity-building activities of OHCHR routinely focus on the Convention, including with respect to preparation of reports and follow-up to concluding observations, as well as the mechanisms established under the Optional Protocol. During 2008 and 2009, OHCHR implemented a large training project on the human rights treaty body system, focusing in particular on follow-up to concluding observations of all human rights treaty bodies. This training was offered to representatives of Government officials, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations and the media in Indonesia, Mexico, Morocco, Panama and Thailand. The Committee also organized two regional judicial colloquia for judges in Bangkok and Panama on the domestic application of human rights norms.

49. The Division for the Advancement of Women continued to work on the implementation of the Convention within the framework of the follow-up to the

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and subsequent mandates of the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women. These mandates recognize that the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the fulfilment of the obligations under the Convention are mutually reinforcing in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.

50. Within the framework of its capacity-development programme, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/218, paragraph 17, the Division continued to extend technical assistance on implementation of the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action and on implementation of and follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations, at the request of States parties. During the reporting period and in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Division organized a subregional workshop on the roles of judges and parliamentarians in the implementation of the Convention, in Amman, from 17 to 19 October 2007. Judges and parliamentarians from nine countries participated in the event; they adopted findings and recommendations on family and personal status laws and on violence against women. The Division subsequently collaborated with ESCWA on a second training workshop on the roles of parliamentarians, from 26 to 28 November 2008, in Beirut. Both workshops benefited from the contributions of experts of the Committee.

51. At the request of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Division supported the participation of two Committee experts, as facilitators and resource persons, in a workshop held from 23 to 24 April 2009. The purpose of the workshop was to develop the methodology for the preparation of the State party's periodic report under article 18 of the Convention and to strengthen the implementation of the Committee's concluding observations on the State party's combined initial, second and third periodic report. The Division supported Haiti in the finalization of its combined initial through fifth periodic report, including the convening of a validation workshop on the draft report from 13 to 15 February 2008. The Division also facilitated the participation, as observer, of one Haitian Government official, at the forty-second session of the Committee, from 29 October to 4 November 2008, in Geneva. The Division continued its multi-phased support to the Government of Liberia to strengthen capacity for implementation of the Convention, including reporting under article 18 of the Convention. Beginning in 2006, the Division organized six capacity-building activities, namely a high-level consultation, from 12 to 15 June 2006; a workshop on the Convention in March 2007; a workshop for Government officials on reporting, from 18 to 22 June 2007; a workshop for report writers, from 19 to 20 November 2007; a workshop to review and finalize the draft report, from 19 to 21 March 2008; and a preparatory workshop ("mock session"), from 12 to 13 May 2009, in advance of Liberia's presentation of its combined initial through fifth periodic report to the Committee at the forty-fourth session in July 2009. The Division also supported the participation of two Government officials at the forty-fourth session.

52. The Division supported the convening of a multi-stakeholder workshop in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on 18 to 19 May 2009, which was attended by 35 officials from different Government ministries, offices and agencies, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations and initiate the preparation of Sierra Leone's sixth periodic report, due in December 2009.

53. The Division continued to provide sustained and comprehensive support to post-conflict countries for the implementation of the Convention. In carrying out this priority programme, it benefited from the support and advice of the United Nations missions and country teams in the States parties concerned. Funding for the programme was provided by the Governments of Ireland, Norway and New Zealand. During the reporting period, the Division supported Haiti, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Committee experts served as facilitators and resource persons in all activities.

## VI. Dissemination of the Convention, its Optional Protocol and information on the work of the Committee

54. OHCHR maintains a page on the Convention and its Optional Protocol and the work of the Committee on its website. The text of the Convention and its Optional Protocol, reports of States parties, lists of issues and questions, responses from States parties, States parties' introductory statements and the composition of delegations presenting reports, the Committee's concluding observations and documents and any other information concerning the Convention, its Optional Protocol, the working methods of the Committee and the meetings of States parties are posted on the website. The Committee's concluding observations, views on communications, general recommendations and other output are also disseminated through the electronic mailing list (listserv) administered by OHCHR. The Universal Human Rights Index, the electronic research tool maintained by OHCHR which indexes concluding observations of human rights treaty bodies and recommendations of special procedures mandate holders, includes all the output of the Committee. The training DVD ("Bringing Human Rights Home") includes the Convention, the Optional Protocol and the work of the Committee. Events and activities associated with the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention and the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Optional Protocol provide opportunities for greater dissemination of the Convention and the impact of the Committee's work.

## VII. Conclusions and recommendations

55. **The Committee has made significant efforts to reduce the delay between the submission of reports and their consideration, using efficient working methods, including time management, which it adjusts on the basis of experience. Its efforts to encourage States parties to comply with their reporting obligations, especially where reports are long overdue, have been successful. It has enhanced its interaction with stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention, in particular with national human rights institutions, and has actively contributed to the common efforts of all treaty bodies to harmonize the human rights treaty body system, while adopting innovations appropriate to its work. The Committee has continued to develop its jurisprudence through its work under the Optional Protocol, and its follow-up procedure under this instrument has yielded positive results. It has adopted one general recommendation and has made considerable progress in developing three others. Despite the Committee's achievements, it must make greater efforts to disseminate the Convention more widely. Particular efforts are required with respect to the Optional Protocol, as few communications have**

**been submitted. The Committee's concluding observations must be considered as authoritative and its new follow-up procedure in this context should be implemented fully by States parties.**